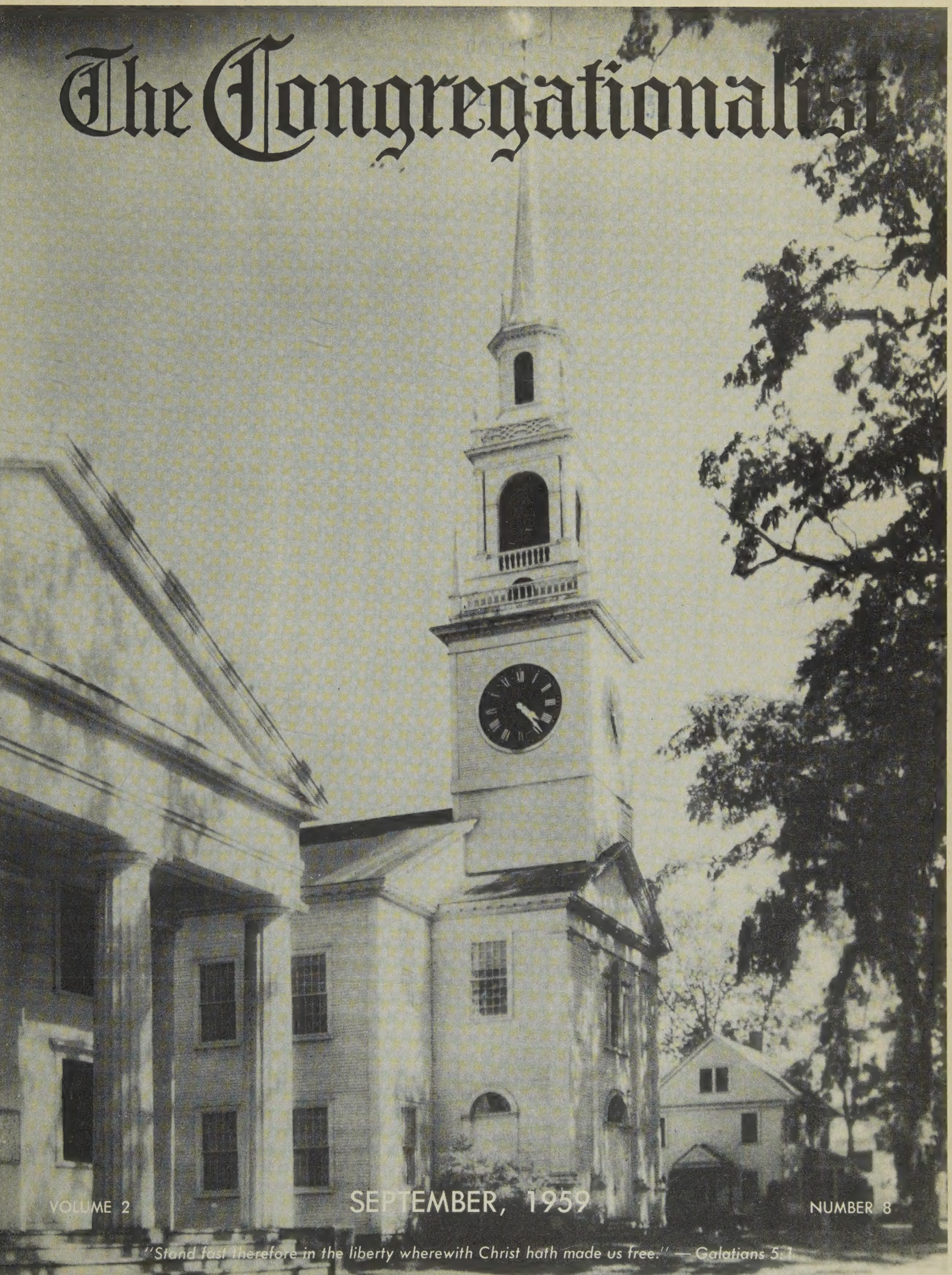
The Congregationalist



VOLUME 2 SEPTEMBER, 1959 NUMBER 8

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

ANTICLIMAX AT OBERLIN

An Editorial

"When church historians set to work recording the most significant events of twentieth-century Protestantism, they may well decide that the Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ merits a special chapter of its own!" (Editorial in UNITED CHURCH HERALD, June 4, 1959)

"It becomes increasingly more difficult for us to say we are united when we are not." (Comment of an Evangelical and Reformed delegate from Ohio, quoted in the Chicago SUN-TIMES, July 8, 1959)

The contrast between these two sentences prompts, and we believe justifies, the caption over this editorial. Although he has had to take his information about the meeting at second hand, the Editor feels certain that the sense of frustration reported by certain observers, and expressed in the words of a Congregational Christian delegate, "What bothers me is not that we cannot approve a constitution but that we cannot commit ourselves to the United Church of Christ," was inevitable sooner or later. The Oberlin anticlimax was the first public admission on the part of promoters of the union that affairs had reached, if not an impasse, at least a serious setback.

Hopes and Disappointments

It would appear that the hopes of the promoters of the union were based, first, on the expectation that the "most sweet harmony of hearts and judgments" which was characteristic of the Savoy Assembly of 1658 would likewise characterize this meeting, and second, on the confidence that the constitution here presented would so reassure the defenders of the Congregational Way that they would soon drop their opposition and climb aboard the ecumenical bandwagon with enthusiasm.

The anticlimax came, we believe, when the "most sweet harmony of hearts and judgments" gave place to some sharp words. One observer reports that "recurring irritation was expressed by E & R men over our 'underlining' autonomy and freedom." The "near explosion" as the same observer calls it, over disagreements on structure, revealed the annoyance of E & R leaders that these matters were being brought out into the open rather than being dealt with in "smaller meetings."

Optimism that the constitution would allay the doubts of pro-Congregationalists did not take into consideration the real ground on which we stand. The readers of this editorial are urged to study carefully the articles in this issue "As Far As The Front Walk" (p. 9) and "What the New Constitution Will Mean to Your Church" (p. 6). Each of these shows, in differing phrase and with emphasis on different aspects, the futility of thinking that the underlying principles of Congregationalism can be found in this strange attempt at mixing polities that will not mix.

Looking Ahead

The vote of the Synod to send the present draft to the Churches for study and suggestions, and to have a definitive draft presented to a special session of the Synod next summer, means that there will be more time than had been anticipated for careful analysis and debate at the local level. The resolution commending the present draft as "an excellent working document" means that the merger enthusiasts hope that no fundamental changes will be made, and this in turn shows that there is no intention on their part to alter the true nature of the document.

The personal opinion held by this Editor, and shared by many convinced Congregationalists is that the anticlimax at Oberlin was inevitable. The old adage "You can't mix oil and water" may well be adapted to church polities. To say "We are mixing the belief that authority in ecclesiastical matters is channeled from God to man through a central body, and the belief that it is best found 'where two or three are gathered together', in such a way as to give equal recognition to both views," is to express an absurdity which will become increasingly evident among thinking people as they ponder the issue.

New Moderator Honored

Professor Gordon W. Kingsbury, Lathrup Village, Michigan, newly-elected Moderator of the National Association, was honored by students and fellow faculty members on his retirement from teaching at Wayne State University, Detroit. On May 15, says the *DAILY COLLEGIAN*, student newspaper at Wayne, a surprise ceremony was held, at which President Hilberry of the University presented him with an Emeritus Beatus Professorship. Earlier the same day many of his students had honored him also.

Mr. and Mrs. Kingsbury had been planning a trip to Europe for many years, and immediately after his return from the National Association Annual Meeting, they took off for England. A card received by the Editor early in July tells of a stimulating interview with Dr. Albert D. Belden of London, whose column "From the Old Country" appears quarterly in THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

Our Help Is Appreciated

The following telegram was received during the Annual Meeting and read by the Moderator at the July 2 business session.

Dr. Henry David Gray
National Association of Congregational Christian Churches Los Angeles, California
Thank you for your 24 June letter with welcome news of proposed contribution to refugees. I welcome this opportunity to convey appreciation to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches for the support both moral and material of the World Refugee Year as expressed in the special service on 1 July and the generous gift for the aid of refugees.

Dag Hammerskjold
Secretary General, United Nations

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Change of address notices, undeliverable copies, orders for subscriptions, and other mail items should be sent to the Editor.

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CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Mrs. Sydney G. Abbot, Westford, Massachusetts

Free principles succeed when they are based on faith in God. The overwhelming growth and success of the United States has been due to the fact that the Founding Fathers and the writers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution based free principles on fundamental religious concepts. We pledge allegiance to the flag of a "nation under God," and therein lies our right to freedom. Any other approach to freedom would fail because under any other standard the understanding of right would be warped by human error and the passion for power. Freedom is secured by being subject first to God, and then to the laws which protect free people and free institutions. Christian freedom is gained by putting aside the evils which "war against the soul."

Man is created by God a free man. As a free being man is capable of living a life on this earth for the purpose of expressing and carrying out the will of God. The perfect life cannot be induced by methods of coercion, but rather depends on willingness and free choice. Thus, God created man with the capacity to achieve the good life. Given freedom of choice, man is equally capable of falling into vanity and error. Good things can be turned to evil use. It is the Christian hope that mankind will choose the way of God to throw off those earthly temptations and forces which stand in the way of freedom.

Freedom and Responsibility

As a free Christian under God, the individual seeks to know "the mind of the Spirit" and "the mind of Christ." This search educates the individual as to what is right, true, and valuable. Christ was constantly with God and knew that God was the Spirit of Truth, and that the truth would make us free. The free Christian is a thoughtful being whose words and actions are considered, whose ways are worthwhile, who looks ahead with hope for the future that God's works will be accomplished and that His children will continue them.

As a thoughtful person, the Christian is a responsible person. His knowledge of the truth gives him authority; he speaks with boldness. Through meeting the mind of Christ, he learns that Christian love is persuasive. He wins favor among his associates. He is able to see clearly; there is no veil across his eyes; his mind is alert; his intentions are patterned after his thoughts; his heart, mind, and soul reflect the image of God. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Bought With A Price

This freedom of the individual has not been obtained without a price. For it Jesus gave His life. He demonstrated that the promise of one individual to be faithful to God will transcend all human power. Though He endured persecution and suffering, His indomitable faith reached its fruition, and His protests against false precepts opened the future highways to God.

Paul was another individual through whom great works were accomplished. A Jew, thoroughly indoctrinated in Hebrew customs, a persecutor of Christians, Paul suddenly had a remarkable religious experience. Jesus called him, "Arise, go into the city, and it shall be told thee what to do." He was convinced that Jesus had "appointed him" an Apostle. His special mission was to carry the gospel to the idol-worshipping Gentiles around the Mediterranean Sea. Through Paul's complete surrender to Christ's calling, other groups gathered as Churches in their communities. Paul was stoned, imprisoned, beaten, suffered shipwreck and loss, but he constantly maintained a zeal to perform his calling, and cheerfully defended himself as a Christian before the magistrates. His authority was the Spirit of Christ. "I speak the truth in Christ."

As the mind of Christ in an individual makes him a free man, so the mind of Christ in a Church makes it a free Church. The First Century Churches had no over-all organization, no assessment for the expenses of the apostles and their associates. Each Church was independent and the giving was voluntary. Each Church received the personal consideration of Paul and the other apostles in regard to the talents of its members, its immediate environment, and its immediate needs. These Churches were united through fellowship in Christ, through correspondence, and visitations.

Various Types of Churches

Three types of church government have developed in the course of the years. Monarchial government places one individual at the head; the aristocratic system places a governing body, such as a Synod, at the head; and congregational polity gives each local Church the right to govern itself. The monarchial and aristocratic church governments emphasize the body as a whole, which is called *the church*. The congregational form of government recognizes that each local body is a complete Church. We speak of the local Congregational Church, the Congregational Christian Churches, or the Congregational Christian fellowship. Several denominations, such as the Unitarians, the Baptists, and the Churches of Christ, have the congregational form of government. Of all the Protestant denominations in the United States today, those congregationally governed outnumber those under the monarchial or aristocratic forms. The natural direction of Protestantism is toward free Churches. The tremendous growth of free Churches has come about through the foresight and religious principles of the founders of this country. In "Notes on Virginia," Thomas Jefferson stated, "The rights of conscience we never submitted, we could not submit (to the coercion of laws). We are answerable for them to our God. The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. . . . Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error."

Congregationalists do not deny that God expresses Himself in various ways, and that the monarchial and aristocratic forms of church government are different forms and expressions of Christianity. The fact of their growth in a free country is a testimony that they serve God. The United States protects the free exercise of all religious faiths and practices, and the courts uphold the variety of forms of church government. Thus, privileged with religious freedom, all Americans may find their own spiritual home.

(THE CONGREGATIONALIST plans to publish in this and in several succeeding issues, chapters of the manuscripts submitted by Mrs. Abbot, and by Rev. Royal G. Davis, for the Savoy Tercentenary Award for the best books on the Christian Life and the Congregational Way as set forth in the Savoy Declaration of 1658.)

Our Cover Picture

The meeting house pictured on our cover this month is that of the First Congregational Church, Hadley, Massachusetts, the second oldest Congregational Church in western Massachusetts. This Church, formed in 1659 by pioneers who had come from Wetherfield and Hartford, Connecticut, under the leadership of Rev. John Russell, Jr., observed the three hundredth anniversary of its founding this summer. The present (third) building was erected in 1808. (Photo by Lincoln W. Barnes.)

THE BLIND PURSUIT OF ONE IDEA

Mrs. Robert K. Richardson, Beloit, Wisconsin

The vision of "one world" and all the people in it brothers has been one of the most heartening concepts in the modern world. In the relatively short time since its popular exposition, we have progressed far enough in the acceptance of this idea so that it would seem that we have taken a perceptible step toward the coming of Christ's Kingdom on earth. We have gone only a step along a road where there are millions yet underfed and living in squalor without help for their diseases. We recognize another obstacle also in our own prejudices against all that is different from ourselves. But the idea is an idea that has already begun to activate men's minds.

History progresses by ideas—men's conceiving them, accepting them, and acting upon them. It is thrilling to see an idea moving men and carrying events with it.

The idea of the brotherhood of man is at least as old as Christianity. It has in modern times been promulgated by the churchly, who have supported missions, and by hundreds of missionaries, who have labored effectively, giving not only years of service, but often their health and sometimes their lives. Today's practice of trying to make the world one, of trying to find common ground with those of other lands, of giving our surplus to feed starving peoples, insofar as it is not actuated by selfish ends, is the contemporary counterpart.

Lately, in matters of church organization, the word to conjur with has been *ecumenicity,* which, with its accompaniment of large numbers, great conventions, and church processions, easily excites the imagination.

The Danger of Going to Extremes

But almost every moving idea has in it the possibility of carrying men to an extreme, of enlisting the loyalty of those who, in their enthusiasm for a good idea, temporarily forget that there are others and that in human progress, we must keep movements in balance with each other or run the danger that our progress will be unbalanced and that we will go too far in one direction and later have to retreat. Because men tend to follow one cause and then another, the progress of events is rarely straight forward but more like the pattern of featherstitching, with a thrust in one direction and then a thrust in another.

Some of those sincerely activated by the idea of one world seem to be forgetting in their whole-hearted pursuit of it that there are other concepts which must not be sacrificed or we are not really progressing toward a better world. I think that we would all agree that freedom, under law that excuses no one and protects all, is one of the values that must not be sacrificed. The price of this freedom is eternal vigilance against tyrannies that might rob us of it: governments that usurp functions that belong to the individual, groups that seek domination of situations and of other groups.

In the book *The Great Illusion,* issued after the First World War, Sir Norman Angell sought to teach us that the military victory was not the real victory because, after it, the victorious nation began to succumb to the ideology of the vanquished. We have within memory fought two wars with totalitarian states, in which we and our allies were the victors. Now in the growing bureaucracy of our nation, in the government's undertaking more and more functions, we are ourselves, almost unconsciously, coming to live under the concepts of those totalitarian states.

This is a tyranny to be fought against if we would preserve man's dignity and freedom. In the General Council's determining to carry the Congregational Churches into a union that was not really desired by many of the Churches, we have seen a striking example of the usurping of authority.

Indispensible Values

We have seen, too, another encroachment upon our freedom in the unwillingness of the Congregational Christian denominational paper to open its columns to free debate on the issue. Freedom of speech is another of the freedoms which we would all agree should not be abrogated, however important it may be to get on to one world. In that one world we shall need freedom of speech as much as we ever have, nation by nation.

In the pursuit of unity, we seem also to be forgetting the values inherent in individuality, in diversity. There is an enormous value in variation, in our not being alike, in our not thinking alike. It is out of such differences that genius arises, that new inventions and new ideas come to birth. It is out of debate between differing points of view that positions are modified and that we arrive at the stabilizing effect of proper compromise between varying opinions. There is so much in our world that is standardized, there are so many pressures upon us to conform, that unless we cherish individuality, we are likely to have less of it and to be deprived of the genius, the inventiveness, and even the interest with which differences can endow our life. Harry S. Wells of Northwestern University, in an address at Rockford College's Charter Day in 1958, made the profound observation that "freedom can flourish only in an atmosphere of diversity."

The Value of Diversity

The variety of denominations in Protestantism has seemed to be an expression of the variety of thought of different groups as to their manner of worship. It is the allowance of freedom. The opposite of this view, that "all denominationalism is sin," would be logically carried out in action only by a return to the Roman Catholic Church. As long as there is freedom for men to worship as they please, there will be a springing up of new sects and denominations to satisfy the religious needs of their founders. Is there not room for these in the framework of Christianity, which in its history has been continually adapted to the needs of the region and the peoples to which it has spread, without losing its essence? Man is still the son of God and the brother of his fellow men whether the Greeks married Christianity to their philosophy or the northerners set up Christmas trees.

In this country our motto is "*E Pluribus Unum,*" out of many, one. The dominant idea is the "one;" yet the *e pluribus* must not be lost sight of. In an organic union such as is planned by the General Council, we would lose some of the value of the variety among denominations.

One of the great strengths of our country is the variety of region, product, peoples, religious practices, political opinion, even accents given to one language. I think that we should not wish to see two of our states join into one state in the effort to demonstrate that they could be friendly, or that the country was one. The federation of the United States has worked partly because the states have been allowed their own powers and their differences. It sometimes seems that we find the best citizen of the whole country in the man who is at the same time a loyal North Carolinian, a loyal Texan, or a loyal Minnesotan.

Continued on Page 5, Column 1

CHART OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The Commission on Christian Education of the National Association is aware of the variety of materials being used in our Church Schools, and of the varied theological points of view represented therein. This is the rightful Congregational way.

In order to help local committees on Christian Education to evaluate the leaflets, books and teacher helps being used or to be used, Miss Katherine Lenroot of the Commission has made an extensive study of the material offered by various denominations and religious publishing houses for use in Junior High School departments, grades 7, 8 and 9. It is in these grades that study of the Church and the meaning of Church membership usually takes place, and this is therefore of great importance in laying foundations for the understanding of the Congregational Way.

This chart, which was first shown at the National Association Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, indicates the variety of choices possible. Unfortunately, in a great many Churches, materials are not always selected on the basis of content. Too often we order those of a certain publisher because "we always have," "they are attractively gotten up," "they are easy to use," or even "they are cheaper."

Will This Serve Our Purpose?

The use of this chart will help those who have the responsibility for ordering to choose materials consistent with the basic beliefs of the local Church. It will help to answer the question, "Does this material help us to teach what we really believe?"

One teacher has been known to ask, "Do I have to keep teaching what I do not believe?" She was brave enough to express what has often been on the minds of others. Many teachers would echo that question.

This chart indicates as far as possible in parallel columns, the basic concepts of God, the Bible, the child, and church polity, which are to be found in the several courses offered by the most widely known publishers. It also suggests supplementary books, references, and audio-visual materials. The purpose of the chart is not to tell local Church Schools what they should use. It is rather to help them to choose the materials best suited to their own purposes.

Copies of this chart are being mailed to all our member Churches, and it is hoped that they will be received in time to be helpful as the new year of activity begins.

Valid For Congregationalists?

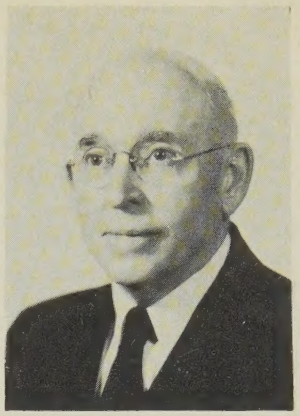
This year "The Church" is the subject for several curricula prepared for Church Schools. It may be well to read this material over thoroughly and see whether any sections need a more pro-Congregational approach. Be on your guard against the growing tendency to emphasize "One Body—One Church."

BLIND PURSUIT (*Continued from Page 4*)

I am not sure but that we find the best Christians among those who are also devoted members of a denomination.

We hope that the idea of one world of brotherly men can be a reality. We would work hard for it. But we are blind to perhaps greater values if, in trying to move toward it, we deny freedom by trying to force a union of Churches against their wills, if we deny the right of free speech, if we deny the value of individuality and diversity, or allow them to be denied.

AWARD TO DR. DAVIES



Dr. Howell D. Davies

One of the unforgettable events at the National Association Annual Meeting at Los Angeles was the presentation, on Tuesday evening June 30, of a scroll to Dr. Howell D. Davies of Chicago, Executive Secretary of the Committee for the Continuation of the Congregational Christian Churches. The occasion was especially significant because the month of June had brought the 50th anniversary of Dr. Davies' ordination to the ministry. As one of his notable pastorates had been in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, the choice of Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr., Executive Secretary of the National Association and a former Wauwatosa pastor, to make the presentation was most suitable. The text of the scroll, which had been written by Palmer D. Edmunds, Esq., of Chicago, is as follows:

"WHEREAS Howell D. Davies, moved by a spirit of deep devotion to the cause of Congregational freedom, relinquished the reward of peaceful retirement which he had richly earned by a lifetime of fruitful service in the Congregational ministry and the Missions Council of the Congregational Christian Churches to assume the arduous responsibilities of Executive Secretary of the Committee for the Continuation of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States;

"and *Whereas* through the troubled years of controversy within the Congregational Christian Fellowship, giving without stint of his time and energies, he has sustained that cause with a Christian dignity that inspired and rallied to action the believers in the Congregational heritage, yet commanded the sincere respect of those who disagreed;

"and *Whereas* his sound counsel played a leading part in bringing into being the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States, of which latter organization he assumed the duties of Secretary-Treasurer, contributing to that office his wide experience in the field of missions:

"NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that on this fiftieth anniversary of his ordination as a minister in June of 1909, the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches at its Fifth Annual Meeting held at Los Angeles, California, on this thirtieth day of June, 1959, hereby records its appreciation for his services to Congregationalism and presents him with this scroll as a token of the personal affection in which he is held."

Important Recording Available

A tape recording of "The Material and Ethical Aspects of the Merger" by Dr. Howell D. Davies, Executive Secretary of the Continuation Committee, may be borrowed without cost, except postage. It deals with the whole question comprehensively. Write Dr. Davies at Room 2308, 100 North La Salle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois.

WHAT DOES THE NEW CONSTITUTION MEAN TO YOUR CHURCH?

Rev. Harry W. Johnson, Boise, Idaho

The new constitution means at least these three things:
1. Your Church is not now in the United Church of Christ.
2. There are *no* Congregational Christian Churches in the United Church of Christ as of this date (fall of 1959)— not even those Churches which have already gone through the motions of "voting themselves in."
3. There is no action now properly open to your Church which can make it officially a part of the United Church of Christ. No such action will be in order for at least another year. Only when the new constitution in its final form has been approved by the General Synod, and then is submitted to your Church, is your Church supposed to take action upon approving it, or upon entering the United Church. Only favorable action by each Church acting for itself will be regarded as evidence of that Church having become a part of the United Church.

Your Church can not be "moved in" or "drawn in" by any action of its association, or by any action of the conference, or of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches. Your Church can not be "assumed to be in" because of any co-operation which it offers in terms of fellowship activities or in terms of financial support which it may give to the support of the work of the United Church, or of the conference, or of the association, or of the missionary societies. Your Church can not "drift in" by the mere absence of action upon the proposed union.

Until and unless your Church has a regularly called meeting with the official edition of the new constitution before it, and at such a meeting, has voted to approve that constitution and to unite with the United Church of Christ, or, disapproving the constitution in part, yet votes to unite; — until that is done, your Church is *not* in the United Church.

Only Tentative — But!

The new constitution for the United Church of Christ which has recently been released to your Churches is only a tentative version. It is not yet the "official edition." It may, and probably will, be revised during the coming year. No vote by your Church to approve (or to disapprove) this tentative document is in order. But even though it is only a tentative version, this new constitution is an important document. Whatever changes are made before the final draft is ready to be released to the Churches, this version serves as an indication, at least in broad outline, of what is to come.

For instance, read carefully Article IV, paragraphs 11, 12 and 13. Also the last sentence in paragraph 19. Here, for the first time since this controversy over the merger began, there is to be found in this constitution, a clear and presumably responsible answer to the simple question: "How does a Congregational Christian Church become a part of the United Church of Christ?"

When an answer to such a basic question, so long delayed, is at last released by the joint committee on constitution, that answer could hardly be retracted or deleted from subsequent editions of the document. Especially is this so when the answer, as now given is so obviously true to the basic fact that *no commitment of a Congregational Christian Church is valid or binding unless that commitment is made by that Church itself, acting for itself.* Actually, any other answer than the one now given would have been not only untrue to the obvious facts, but would also have been in conflict with the statement by The Court of Appeals of The State of New York that "Union depends on voluntary action freely taken by independent autonomous Churches."

The Protection of the Courts

Since it is henceforth to be acknowledged by one and all that each Church is to make its own decision for itself, the lay members of the Church are certain to feel the need of more adequate information about the whole problem. They will want to know about their own Church, its organization, its constitution and its articles of incorporation.

Congregational or Christian Churches are usually incorporated under the laws of their own state. The purpose which motivated those who brought your Church into being as an incorporated body is declared in the articles of incorporation. That purpose was given the protection of the state when the state granted to your Church the status of a religious corporation.

Among other rights thus to be protected by the state is the right to continue as a Congregational or Christian Church, and to continue to hold all Church property for the purpose of propagating the gospel "according to the faith, polity and practices" of Congregational Churches.

Can church property which is dedicated to "the faith and polity of Congregational Churches" be moved into the United Church? Is the United Church of Christ to be a denomination which is likely to be held by the secular courts to be Congregational in faith, polity and practices?

There is likely to be some confusion injected into the discussion of these matters when reference is made to the assurances given in the constitution, paragraphs 21 and 22. In these paragraphs it is stated that each Church is to have "autonomy" in the "management of its own affairs." To some people, such assurances may sound like assurances that the Congregational polity will characterize the new denomination.

But careful reading of the other portions of the constitution and especially of the by-laws will show that many of the activities of the local Church where freedom is *most important* are declared to be also the concern of the whole denomination, and therefore are properly to be under the close supervision of denominational officials outside of the local Church. The whole plan for over-head supervision of so many of the activities of the local Church is indeed very different from anything we have ever known in Congregationalism. President James E. Wagner was entirely correct when he said "The United Church of Christ will be presbyterial in structure."

The E & R Leaders Understood

Whatever may be one's personal attitude toward the distinction between Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, the important fact in our present situation is that the difference between the two polities has been the basis for decisions in the courts of many states where there were legal contests over title to church property. In states where such decisions have been rendered, no church property now held for the exercise of the "faith, polity and practices" of one of these denominations could be taken into the other denomination by any vote of its members, if any minority of its members protested that action.

The leaders of the E & R Church did not fail to see the implications of this fact for them. If the United Church were not to be basically presbyterial in structure, like the E & R Church, it would have been legally impossible for

Continued on Opposite Page

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISSIONS

Mrs. George J. Mead, Hartford, Connecticut

All of us know that missions are important as never before within our lifetime, because of the unbelievably piteous plight of hundreds of thousands of dispossessed or otherwise downtrodden people who are overwhelmed by economic destitution on the one hand and political authoritarianism on the other. It is our responsibility as Congregational Christians to show them that we care. How to go about this has puzzled us in recent years.

It is obviously foolish to send our missionary contributions through the old channels, as we would have no assurance that our money would go to the missions for which it was intended, and even if it was earmarked for a certain cause, it is an established fact that only *one half of one per cent* of the $266,472 increase in missionary giving over the past ten years has reached the field. Think of it!! A little over $1300 out of all these thousands! The rest has been squandered on administrative costs and "promotional" expenditures. When you think of the hours of work over stove or sewing machine, as well as the sacrificial giving which the missionary dollars represent, it is horrifying to realize that with all the heartrending appeals for missions, such a shockingly small percentage ever reaches that for which it was intended.

A New Agency Formed

Several years ago, a group of us, discussing this question, decided to do something about it. Out of that discussion "The Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches" was born. Through it we could send our missionary dollars for those causes for which we had special concern, and could know that every single dollar we sent would go intact to that for which it had been given. There has been a very thrilling response to the formation of this missionary society. More than five times the amount that had tentatively been set as our goal for this present year has been received thus far. The needs, however, are far greater than we can hope to meet, even if we could double or treble the amount that has been sent to this Society, and which has in turn been sent in its entirety to those causes for which it was earmarked. You see *The National Association absorbs all administrative costs.*

We therefore urge you to send your missionary money to "The Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches," Room 2308, 100 North LaSalle St., Chicago 2, Illinois. By doing so you will help those you wish to help, and you will not waste money on projects which you have no desire to support. We also hope that all will remember that by supporting the National Association which sponsors the Missionary Society you will not only be helping to support some of the missions which are especially dear to you, but you will also be helping to preserve the great and historic freedoms of the Congregational Christian Churches.

WHAT DOES THE NEW CONSTITUTION MEAN TO YOUR CHURCH?

Continued from Page 6

the E & R Church to have entered into the United Church. And the E & R Church is *now* "*in*" the United Church.

Since the Basis of Union, as the E & R leaders interpreted that document, gave adequate assurance that the United Church would be presbyterial in structure, the E & R people foresaw that there would be no major legal problems in moving the E & R Church into the United Church of Christ.

Through the years, therefore, the E & R leaders consistently refused to join in any other proposal for the union that would have made the polity of the United Church basically Congregational. They knew that it would have been legally not permissible for a presbyterially constituted denomination like the E & R Church to move itself across a denominational line into a union committed to Congregational polity. They have left it for Congregationalists to find out for themselves whether or not it is legally permissible for Congregational bodies to move across a denominational line into a union with a new denomination of presbyterial structure.

Our own denominational leaders have been too zealous for organic unity to give adequate thought to the legal necessities. The missionary boards and societies of the Congregational Christian Churches, following the lead of the General Council (which claimed not to be bound by the wishes of the Churches) have been plunged into the plan of union before any one could know whether or not a legally valid way could *ever* be found for local Congregational and Christian Churches to become a part of the new "United Church of Christ." The question as to the legal right of these boards and societies thus to separate themselves from the Congregational Christian Churches is yet to be determined.

Your Own Church Must Face This

The questions which will be confronting your own Church will have to include the matter of the legal structure within which Congregational or Christian Churches incorporated in your state may properly function.

If the majority of the members of your Church wish to have their Church remain as it is, a Congregational Christian Church without any legal relationship with any other ecclesiastical body, the right of your Church to choose such a course is clear and undebatable.

But if a majority of the members should vote to unite with the new organization, and if a minority of the members, be that minority ever so small, should make legal protest against that action, the legal precedents are very strongly in favor of the prediction that the courts will award title to the property to that group, large or small, which continues most consistently with the "faith, polity, and practices" that prevailed before the controversy began.

Even more important, however, than all questions of who will get the church property is the question as to who will be found to have the deepest and most abiding convictions about the place of Congregationalism in the future of the Protestant religious life of America and the world. Congregationalism as a way of life among Churches will survive and prosper. After the present storm, Congregationalists will know better than we have ever known before, why it is so important that your Church and my Church should have no other Head but Christ.

WOMEN'S WORK

(The following articles were written by leading Congregational women in Michigan, at the request of Mrs. Robert E. Collins, 1014 Floral Drive, Grand Rapids, for THE CONGREGATIONALIST. The Women's Work page is a regular feature in our periodical, and articles for it are always welcome.)

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Mrs. William Schmitz, Allegan, Michigan

There is an ancient legend about Jesus after the ascension. The angel Gabriel says to Him, "So Your work is finished." Jesus replies, "No, it is only begun." "What plans have You made, then, to insure its completion?" Jesus replies, "I have told Mary and Martha, Peter and James, John, and others, and they will in turn tell others." "But," Gabriel queries, "What if they forget? What if they become very busy with their cooking and cleaning, their boats and nets and fishing? What other plans have You made?" Jesus replies, "I have made no other plans; I am depending on them."

John 12:26. "If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honor."

The device suggested here was planned for measuring visually actual time spent on Church work and related activities. It is not intended to stimulate competition between individuals or groups but as a means of self-evaluation for all participating. It has been used in women's groups and in one church on a family basis when the congregation undertook church renovation work. It is best used over a limited period of time — say three months. At the conclusion of the period the Chairman of the project will receive anonymous reports from all participating, etc. Each "counter" — penny, bean, button, or whatever is used — put in the box represents one hour of service. Fractions of hours may, of course, be accumulated. If pennies are used they may be accumulated for some specified project. Each participant should have a check list.

Suggested categories, each subdivided to fit special circumstances, could be: Attendance; Teaching; Visiting; Secretarial; Music; Manual Work; Entertaining — Dramatics; Youth Work; General. Let us all be doers. He is depending on us as he did on Mary and Martha, Peter and James, John and the others.

RESULT: A MEN'S CLUB

Mrs. F. Willard Kime, Eaton Rapids, Michigan

Does your church have a Men's Club? Isn't there a need for the men to get better acquainted with the church, its functions, and with each other? What have you done? This is what one church did —

"The men of our church were not much different than those in other churches. The women were lamenting the fact that they could not get their husbands interested in attending services with them . . . It was different with the women with their social and church groups — they knew each other well.

The Missionary Committee at their meetings had divided the various missionary projects recommended by the National Association into five parts and conceived the idea of both earning money for one of these projects and at the same time getting the men together by getting the husbands of the three members of the committee to put on a dinner . . . One of the husbands had been an old army cook, one a camp cook, and the other a former pastry cook.

The three husbands were able to get a committee of fifteen men together; they not only put on a dinner, they washed the dishes and waited table. The result: A Men's Club was formed by this dinner group, and in three months has grown into an enthusiastic group. They are getting to know each other and have already taken an active part and interest in the church — and are attending the services regularly."

SUGGESTED READING

From time to time importance is placed on the need for Congregationalists, and Congregational women in particular, to refresh their knowledge and appreciation of our historical background and events leading to our desire to protect and hold dear those freedoms we cherish.

The following books are merely suggestions. Since Congregational Christian Churches represent a wide variety of beliefs rather than adherence to a particular creed or set of dogmas, this list necessarily reflects a variety of tastes and is in no way intended as endorsement of any particular viewpoint.

History of American Congregationalism, Gaius Glenn Atkins, Frederick L. Fagley (Pilgrim Press)

Congregationalism As Shown In Its Literature, Henry Martin Dexter (Harper & Bros., N. Y. 1880)

Congregationalists In America, Albert E. Dunning (J. A. Hill & Co., N. Y., 1894) Contains special chapters by leading Congregationalists of that period.

Law Of Congregational Usage, Barton

Manual Of Congregational Churches, Dexter, 1880

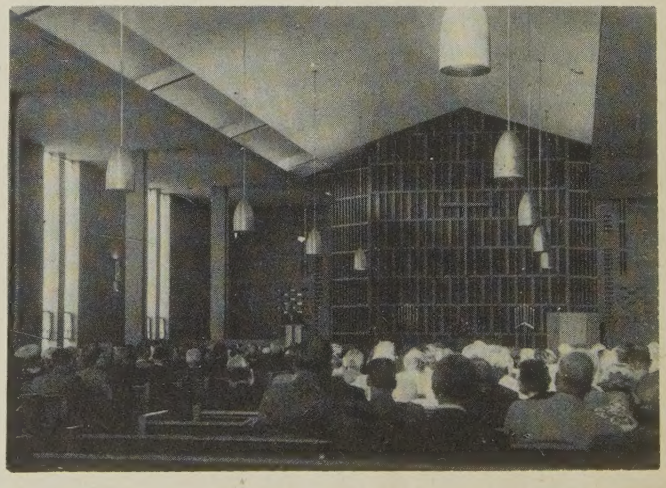
Manual Of Congregational Christian Churches, Oscar E. Maurer (Pilgrim Press) 1954

John Wise, Early American Democrat, George A. Cook, 1952

Destiny For Congregationalism, Malcolm K. Burton (Modern Publishers, Inc., Oklahoma City, $3.00, 1953)

Collectivism In the Churches, Edgar C. Bundy (Church League of America, 1407 Hill Ave., Wheaton, Illinois, $5.00, 1958)

NORTH CHURCH, DETROIT



Michigan Council for the Advancement of Congregationalism holds Annual Meeting, May 1959.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr.

A Reason To Be Encouraged

One of our major concerns has been that so few Congregational Churches have had pro and con discussions of the merger issues. There are various reasons for this. But it has been startling to discover such a large percentage of Congregationalists who are not aware of these issues.

As a National Association we have been primarily interested in developing a program of cooperation and fellowship among our member-Churches. But we have also been interested in finding ways to encourage people to become informed, to study available documents, to participate in discussions. I am personally pleased with two things that have happened recently which I believe will result in a greater amount of study and discussion.

First, the proposed constitution of the "United Church of Christ" contains a provision which means that no Congregational Church can be counted as a member of the "United Church of Christ" until it has taken positive action. The actual statement in the constitution says, "The following congregations or local churches constitute the United Church of Christ: . . . b. The congregations or local churches of the Congregational Christian fellowship which approve this constitution or which, although they do not approve it, vote to become part of the United Church of Christ." Whatever else this means, it means that the local Churches must take a vote to become members of this new denomination. We can at least hope that such votes will in every case be preceded by pro and con discussion of the issues.

Second, the General Synod delayed giving its approval to this constitution. There is opportunity for suggested revisions to be made, and a revised constitution will be presented next summer to a special meeting of the General Synod. This means that there will be opportunity during this coming year to encourage study and discussion. The amount of time available for study of the constitution will not be limited to a few brief weeks.

We must not assume, however, that such study will take place automatically. Added to the lethargy which seems to characterize most human beings will be a desire on the part of some leaders to avoid thorough study and debate.

Nevertheless, this is an opportunity to help all Congregationalists understand what this merger controversy is all about. We can explain why a true Congregationalist cannot subscribe to an over-all constitution. We can point out that the proposed constitution describes a type of church structure which is fundamentally different from the Congregational pattern. We can interpret our conviction that the concept of organic unity is not the best way to express cooperation among Christians.

I am encouraged by this new opportunity for discussion at the local level. Why? Because I believe that when Congregational people really understand the issues, they will be unable to approve the constitution. They will, rather, decide to continue as Christians of the Congregational persuasion.

AS FAR AS THE FRONT WALK

Dr. Harry R. Butman, Los Angeles, California

The Basis of Union, the original instrument for merger, attacked the autonomy of the local Church. The proposed Constitution assails the other basic principle of Congregationalism, the fellowship of the Churches. Any local Church which joins the United Church of Christ will be Congregational as far as the front sidewalk.

The constitution, in its description of the local Church, is admittedly better than the Basis of Union. While the "congregation" of the United Church of Christ falls far short of the complete Church of true Congregationalism, nevertheless proponents of the merger have made reluctant concessions to the logic and facts of those who found the Basis of Union a defective document. The proposed constitution grants, for example, that a local Church may withdraw from the United Church of Christ without loss of property rights, and the congregation is given a rather free hand in "the management of its own affairs." (Art. IV, Par. 21) To persons concerned about the autonomy of the local Church, Article IV of the constitution seems generous indeed.

But as one reads further he sees that this apparent autonomy exists within a sharply circumscribed area. For the constitution makes the present local Association into a presbytery, declares the conference to be an ecclesiastical as well as an administrative body, and decrees the General Synod to be the seat of authority. The result of these unwarranted grants of power is the negation of the autonomy of the local Church as it is set forth in Article IV. In short, the constitution paternally erects a high fence around the local Church and forbids the Church to leave the yard.

Fellowship Abrogated

By thus denying the local Church the right to go forth, the constitution abrogates the second focal truth of Congregationalism, the fellowship of the Churches. According to the proposed constitution, the relationships of the Churches with each other, and the missionary outreach of the Churches, are no longer matters under the influence or control of the Churches. The Churches will not be able to assemble freely as a local Association for inspiration, counsel, and mutual help. The emasculated Association of the future will be allowed to assemble and act only in a manner "consistent with this constitution and by-laws." (Article VI, Par. 37.) The future Association is not one "of Churches and ministers." It is an Association *of* a Conference, which is, in turn, a Conference *of* the General Synod. Nor can a congregation of the United Church of Christ give freely to projects of its own benevolent choice. The congregations' offerings must be impersonally channeled to uses unknown to it, and possibly alien to its wishes and ideals. The fellowship of the Churches, and the whole missionary task, are no more "affairs" of the local Church, and so are no longer under its "management."

If the proposed constitution comes into force, the congregations of tomorrow will be housed under an intricate arching structure of overhead control. It was better when the local Churches lived together under the skies of liberty, open to the influences of that Spirit which "bloweth where it listeth," and the braver and stronger Churches will still dare to live after that good free fashion.

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL MEETING

(Condensed From a Sermon Delivered in the First Congregational Church, Hutchinson, Kansas, July 12, 1959).

Rev. Angus MacDonald

This is the fifth successive meeting of the National Association that it has been my privilege to attend. At the first meeting we met with a sense of tragedy and fear. For years we had seen the leaders of our fellowship try to change the nature of our Churches but it was with no joy that we decided that the only way we could continue Congregationalism was by having a fellowship of those Churches that desired to see continue in America that kind of Church where Christ alone was the head of His Church. All fear and sense of tragedy are now gone. Although we are still not a large fellowship, we are all of one mind. We have no wrangling or political maneuvering because the National Association has no authority—that is reserved to the Churches—and we have a deep sense of mission that freedom under God is a gospel that the people of this country want and which this great land of ours needs.

Glimpses of the Commissions

The National Association has set up six commissions. They are: Missions, Women's Work, Christian Education, Ministry, Publications, and Youth Work.

Missions: In the past nine months the Commission on Missions has received about $70,000. With this money it has sponsored four Churches—two in Ohio and two in California—and supported the work of free Churches in Hong Kong and South India. We have two other new Churches, both of which are self supporting—one in Grand Rapids, Michigan and one in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. There is no limit to the number of new Churches we can found if finance is available. We could start a thousand Churches in ten years if we have the men and money.

Christian Education: An evaluation chart is being prepared and sent to the Churches whereby they shall have a yardstick to measure the value of the materials that they are now using. There is no intention of telling the Churches what they should use but it was thought that a guide would be helpful and particularly in those classes where the nature of the church is being taught. They are also going to work on the publication of curriculum material.

Publications: The Publications Commission has published several small pamphlets: "What It Means to be a Member of a Congregational Christian Church," and it will continue to do more of such work. It initiated a competition for a manuscript on the Savoy Declaration and this manuscript is now ready for the printer. Several other competitions are being conducted. The Executive Committee of our General Council has allowed to go out of print *History of American Congregationalism* by Atkins and Fagley, which is the best book on Congregationalism printed in this country in this century, and our commission is trying to get the rights to have reprintings made.

Youth Work: By the setting up of a national commission for youth it is hoped that guidance and coordination on a national scale will be given to our churches that previously was given by the National Pilgrim Fellowship. They plan travel caravans so that young people might be drawn together. This commission has just begun and will probably offer more with the passage of time.

The Ministry: The key to our continued success will be in the procurement of ministers for our Churches. It may never be a great problem because ministers from other churches are continually wanting to come into our free fellowship. They always have and we may expect that they will continue to do so in the future. We must not rely on fate, however, but do as much work on this program as we can.

One of the problems is to have a seminary to which we can recommend young people wishing to enter the ministry. There is no seminary we know of that does not teach that the denomination is superior to the local Church. It is impractical at the moment to found our own seminary as it would cost, we estimate, about three million dollars. Arrangements are being made, therefore with Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, so that we can send young men there and have them taught the message that Christ is the only authority in the local congregation. We are most fortunate that such an eminent school as Earlham is anxious to cooperate with us in this venture.

We are going to encourage lay preaching and provide training schools for men who will do that. Ministers will be brought over from England and Ireland to help fill our needs. We are in the process of establishing a scholarship fund to help young men who want to be ministers of free Churches. Ordination will be brought back to the Churches, where it used to be. When a young man graduates from seminary, he will ask the Church to which he is going to ordain him. The Church will then ask the help of sister Churches. Our National Association will automatically recognize ordination by a local Church.

(Editor's Note: The points covered in the remainder of Mr. MacDonald's sermon parallel to a great extent the comments on the constitutional issue found elsewhere in this number.)

News Notes

Rev. James G. Mead, Park Avenue Congregational Church, Toledo, Ohio, has accepted the pastorate of First Congregational Church, Mansfield, Ohio . . . Rev. Harold L. Aldrin, Bowling Green, Ohio, is moving to the Hilo Coast Parish Church, Honomu, Hawaii . . . Rev. George W. Brown, Jr., Fair Haven, Vermont, will begin work October 1 as Minister of Christian Education at the First Congregational Church of Fall River, Massachusetts. . . . Fourth Congregational Church, Chicago, Illinois, has called Rev. Edward F. White of Hope Church, Worcester, Massachusetts, and he has accepted . . . Rev. George Seafort began work July 1st at the Pullman, Michigan, Congregational Church . . . Rev. Raymond C. Ortland, Scotia, New York, has succeeded Rev. James H. Hutchins at the Lake Avenue Congregational Church, Pasadena, California . . . Rev. Raymond J. Fleming has been called to the Central Methodist-Congregational Church, Superior, Wisconsin.

About The Lawsuit

The question is sometimes asked, "What news about the lawsuit?" This refers of course to the suit filed in the Federal Court, Southern District of New York, in June 1957, by four Congregational Christian Churches and ten members, asking for a declaratory judgment regarding the Basis of Union and Interpretations.

The answer to the question so often asked is, "Yes, this suit is still pending." When further and more definite information is available, THE CONGREGATIONALIST will keep its readers informed.

ACCENT ON YOUTH

Our California Caravan

(As it might have been written by one of us: Holly Mach or Donna Lee Porter of Massachusetts, Robert Muszinski, Linda Clark, Billy Barks or Bruce Alexander of Hartford, or Clare Montgomery of Forest Hills, New York)

Our hearts were happy as the heavily laden station wagon eased out of the South Church parking lot in Hartford on June 23rd. We waved good-bye to our parents and friends, to the sewing ladies and to members of the prayer circle, all bidding us Godspeed. We were headed southwest, to Los Angeles and the Annual Meetings, and our first Youth Gathering of the National Association: six high schoolers, one collegian, and a minister's wife.

Caravan at Burlington, Iowa

Songs — the best; *talk* — all kinds, on heaven and hell, salvation, love and marriage, prayer, power and politics; all these and *good fellowship* were the order of every day and every night for the entire five and a half weeks. When not in the car for evening vespers or morning worship, led usually by a young person, we found or waited for a point of scenic beauty: the Grand Canyon at dusk, the white sands of Carmel at mid-morning, Wawona Point among the sequoias at sunset and at dawn, Sentinel Dome, atop the world in Yosemite, the shores of Lake Tahoe and Great Salt Lake, wind-swept plains of Wyoming, or a lightning storm near Mt. Rushmore.

At the Annual Meeting

In Los Angeles, Neil Swanson was a favorite, as he led the youth commission and we thought together about plans for a national fellowship. Two of our group were elected officers, Bruce and Linda. We enjoyed getting acquainted with other ministers at meal-times, especially "the English ministers," and we were glad we could share in the closing Thursday afternoon service in choreographic worship when David Gray, last summer's youth leader at South Church, was our reader, and Walter Couch, Holly's minister, gave the meditation.

After sight-seeing in Southern California we headed north, via the cool and beautiful coast, to fulfil our second purpose, fellowship with young people of member Churches, exchanging ideas and sharing in experiences of play and worship. We held panels and workshops on youth activities which usually included games and songs, plans for program building, leadership skills, interest groups, officers' retreats, adult cooperation, and service projects.

While we were doing this our leaders, Mrs. Gray and JoeAnne Pease (collegian nurse and co-driver) might be meeting with other people about women's work, Church

Continued on Column 2

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

Rev. Kenneth V. Gray, South Paris, Maine

"Heirs of God"

The revolutionary conviction of the early Christians was that God is no mere external power and authority but someone who lives within us, transforming our thinking and feeling and setting us free from conformity to pressures of the world about us. We need to recover for ourselves this conviction that God is within us, that "in Christ Jesus, we are sons of God, through faith," that we have something of God's own "seed" or heredity in our make up.

Of course, it is quite obvious that we also have, and too often use, the power to suppress our God-heredity, if we wish. But when we provide it with the right conditions, this God-heredity will "show itself" in our lives, just as our human traits are bound to "come out" in our children. It will bear fruit in our lives. Paul lists these "fruits of the Spirit": love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control — all of them human qualities, yet precisely the qualities of which human nature quickly runs short apart from Christ.

We tend to assume that these qualities are not fruits which will grow naturally from within us, but goals which have to be achieved by hard work and stern self-denial. But when we try to force ourselves; or anyone else, to be loving, joyous, peaceable, and all the rest, we merely achieve something as obviously artificial as the cherries on a dollar-and-ninety-five-cent hat; or at best a hot-house variety of the real thing.

This is the inevitable result of imposing rules and regulations upon ourselves in order to suppress the evil that is in us, instead of taking the chains and shackles off the God-heredity that is in us, and living relaxed and free in the liberty of sons and daughters of God.

Continued from Column 1

School curriculum or free Church polity. Occasionally we all met together and discovered that adults really want to like and help us. They don't always know how!

Our Impressions

Everywhere the young people and ministers were friendly and invited us to come again. No group we visited has a planned summer program (or unplanned!) yet all were keen to do things together. Some adults, even ministers, seemed afraid of the young people, even when wanting to help them. We often wished we could have stayed longer to help them know we're human too, but still not able—quite—to "go it alone." When we try, or have to try, that's when kids get in trouble sometimes. We don't want to, or need to!

The records show we led in worship, workshops or panels in or affecting eighteen different member Churches. (Mr. Swanson wrote letters in advance to seventeen, telling of our proposed trip). We've written evaluations on every one visited with suggestions on how to better it "next time." Mostly we'd like to stay longer, if invited, and really help them to have a church-centered summer and outline real plans for the year ahead, geared to each Church's situation.

Our hearts were still happy, but thoughtful and thankful too, as we came back into that parking lot on July 31. It was a privilege to have caravanned together.

h. l. g.

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FROM THE LETTER BOX

EDITOR, *The Congregationalist,*

As a regular reader of your paper, I should like to submit for your attention some portions of a radio talk given on May 3 by Dr. Max D. Gaebler of the First Unitarian Society of Madison, Wisconsin. While Dr. Gaebler was not speaking on matters of concern within Congregationalism, it seems to me that many of his observations, some of which follow, come close to our present merger problem.

"While our highly organized life shapes and advances people capable of serving organizations, our greatest need is for the kind of vision and imagination which can be produced only in an atmosphere of complete individual freedom to think and experiment without constant reference to organizational responsibilities. The 'organization man' may well be indispensible in a society destined to ever more complicated organization, but he is not normally the kind of independent and unfettered thinker we need in positions of top leadership in our major organizations both public and private. For the need at the top is not only for smooth and efficient functioning of the machinery, but for the kind of vision which can infuse the whole mechanism with purpose.

"The problem, in short, is what happens to individuals in a society as highly organized as is ours in mid-twentieth century America. We mouth the old cliches about respect for the individual, about the sanctity of personality, about safeguarding individual initiative. Yet the actual structure of our institutions belies these pious professions. In the process of rising to a position of eminence — whether in government or business or (dare I add?) academic or ecclesiastical life — the qualities that serve one well are essentially those of the 'organization man'. Not the inveterate individualist but the person skilled in human relations, in knowing how to accommodate differing views in a comprehensive policy — such a person is likely to rise. Such skills, let me say again, are very real and important; yet they are not adequate for genuine leadership. And the problem remains a serious one of how to develop the kind of initiative and imagination we need when the system itself operates in an opposite direction . . . . .

"This, then, is the problem: to revive a sense of reverence for the unique, to nourish imaginative, fruitful, yet responsible individualism. And where are we to look for those who will vindicate the claims of individuality? . . . . .

"As I read Mr. Henry Kissinger's analysis (in THE REPORTER magazine) of this indispensible function of the intellectuals as independent and imaginative critics of the policymakers who stand at the summit of our organizational life, it occurred to me that there was a very close parallel with the role of the churches. For while it by no means exhausts the meaning of organized religion, it is certainly an important part of its function to maintain its complete freedom and independence of government and also of the massive organizations of industry and labor in order that it may protect its own heritage of religious ethical values. And it must do more than protect the autonomy of this heritage; it must harbor thinkers and preachers who with the authentic voice of the prophets will bring the actions

Continued from Column 1

and decisions of the policymakers under the judgment of those values of which it is the guardian and interpreter.

"Among those values, surely, our Western religions rank high the ultimate worth of individual responsibility, the sanctity of each individual human being as a unique child of God. Over and over in history it has been those speaking in the name of religion who have called the policymakers to account, injecting a note of moral purpose into otherwise routine and mechanical procedures. Here too is a valuable and valid witness to the sacredness of the unique. Particularly in our free churches which have always placed the authority of individual conscience above any official dogma has this witness been powerful, recurrent, and compelling."

I trust that this will be of interest to your readers.

Lake Geneva, Wisconsin — Hans Gubler

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

Why men change their denomination is always worth noting and often interesting. In the devotional symposium GREAT PHRASES OF THE CHRISTIAN LANGUAGE we should be able to discover why several doctors of divinity left Congregationalism for the United Church of Christ. (Christian Education Press, $2.00). Since they hold leadership positions in the new denomination, their words may also suggest the future path they will try to make it follow.

The key essay is by Truman Douglass on the nature of the Church. His title, "The Holy Church Throughout All the World" was coined by Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, who was so largely responsible for changing the New Testament idea of separate, equal and independent Churches into the Roman Catholic dogma of a corporate, centralized Christian institution called the one, holy universal Church. Dr. Douglass restates this ancient thesis that the total church must dominate the life and worship of the local parishes. A strong believer in such an idea could never feel at home in the voluntary fellowship of autonomous Congregational Churches. And such a concept has been at the root of merger discussions from beginning to end.

The United Church of Christ was supposed to bring together the treasures of the Congregational, Christian, Evangelical, and Reformed traditions. Its first published book shows a distressing lack of concern for any of these. It speaks rather in the vague generalities of a report from the ecumenical movement. How can the United Church share any of the Congregational spirit when its past heroes and thinkers are so conspicuously ignored? The authorities quoted in this book are Lutheran theologians, Methodist hymn-writers, Presbyterian professors, Catholic poets, and an Anglican monk. J. S. Whale and P. T. Forsyth are the only Congregationalists referred to and no mention is made of their denominational affiliation.

If GREAT PHRASES gives any clue, it suggests the determined effort to cut off all historic roots, Congregational, Christian, Evangelical, or Reformed, in favor of a super-church in and over the world. These plans are impossible to realize, but the very dream is worth noting.